

Reader Letters



Lots of folks have tried lots of ways to seal silage in the silo and in pits to reduce spoilage. I knew one farmer who would top his silage with lime. It sealed, but was hard to break through.

A simple way that I've tried that really worked well was to seed down the top with oats. When I worked for a farmer with upright silos, we would blow in oats on the top, and they would sprout and put out a network of tight roots. The heat in the silo would keep them growing, and we didn't have any spoilage.

Later when I had my own place and a bunker silo, I tried plastic with tires, but if kids weren't poking holes in the plastic, the rats were eating holes in it, and the top layer usually spoiled. Then I tried oats again. I hand cast them thicker than you would seed a field. At the time, I used a moveable gate to let my cows eat their way through the pit. The first thing the cows would reach for would be the layer of oat roots, and I didn't get spoilage either. **(Elmer R. Bailey, 24791 Mouser Rd., New Holland, Penn. 43145, ph 740-495-5821)**

We've made some big changes to our rotary mower blade products that you featured in a past issue of FARM SHOW. High insurance premiums have forced us to stop making our rotary blade replace-



able inserts and instead make one-piece replacement blades. What hasn't changed is the high quality, hardened, armor-quality steel that we use. The price of steel has risen, due to the Iraq war and the increased need for armor plated vehicles there.

All blades are made to order and are available in normal, medium, high lift or mulching styles. They are field proven to last up to three times longer than conventional blades and hold their edge twice as long between sharpening. **(Lee Duncan, Cutmore Blade Company, 4310 E. Back Rd., Lewistown, Ill. 61542 (ph 800 841-7002); website: www.cutmoreblade.com).**

In your last issue, you carried an article about tearing down old barns. While the company source quoted in the article does build with recycled lumber, it is my company that actually does the old barn disassembly, including the one pictured in the article. I have been in the business full time for the past 15 years and have worked on between 300 and 400 barns.



Taking down a barn is the last option. I encourage people to try to save it. I can forward a list of barn repair companies to those who are interested. If it can't be saved, my company offers an alternative. Whether your readers are dealing with myself or someone else, there are a couple of things they ought to keep in

mind. Recovering boards and beams for maximum value is hard work. It involves hand tools and a lot of labor. You can't scratch or scar the wood or it may lose its value. You can take a building apart and run want ads, but it takes time and effort.

While there is a national market for barn wood, buyers are cautious about working with people they don't know. I got into it by accident, but have built up my contacts slowly over the years, with most of my wood being sold in the western market.

Before letting someone tear down your barn, I would recommend you get your money up front. A few years back, a guy in Michigan promised to split the profits with barn owners. He walked out with more than \$150,000, and the barn owners got nothing. Secondly, get references from people the firm has worked with.

Third, ask to see an insurance policy that protects workers from injury. Last of all, make sure that any waste is handled in a way you agree with. We will pile broken and rotted pieces (there are always some) in a pile on the foundation to be burned or buried.

I live on an old farm site myself and appreciate the wood in these old barns. It is good to see companies like Big Wood building houses out of the wood. Until recently, there hasn't been much interest in that in the Midwest, but it is growing. If people are interested in learning the value of their old barns, I would be glad to visit with them. **(Richard Jefferies, Oakhaven, 14878 594th Ave., Mapleton, Minn., ph: 507 524-4840; email: oakhaven@hickorytech.net)**

I strapped two 15-gal. containers on front of my ATV, along with a 'pick stick.' I use the items to pick up litter in ditches along township roads and also along some



county and state highways. When working along state highways I pull a small trailer behind to store the litter. The containers are held on with rubber straps, which I can quickly remove in order to dump the litter. The system lets me clean up road ditches without ever having to get off the ATV. **(Stephen Becvar, Box 51, Hayfield, Minn. 55940)**



I used 3-in. dia. wood poles to make a firewood rack that I move around with a small loader tractor. The firewood rack has a pair of A-shaped uprights at each end that are lashed together with wire. A horizontal pole on top is lag screwed to the uprights. The floor consists of more horizontal poles. To haul wood I simply position the loader bucket underneath the horizontal pole on top, then raise the bucket and drive off. **(Bob Barnes,**



I came up with a handy place to store tools on my 1999 Ford 3/4-ton pickup equipped with a flatbed. I cut a 37-in. wide by 10-in. high door into the back end giving access to an 8-ft. deep space where I can store tools such as shovels, rakes, hammers, chipping bars, cheater pipes,

BARNtek, 27404 Co. Rd. 319, Buena Vista, Colo. 81211 ph 719 395-8573)

I thought your readers would like to see this one-of-a-kind "spider web" metal sign that I made. It's located next to the road in front of our house and has our street



address on it, so first-time visitors have no trouble finding our rural home.

The 8-sided sign stands about 3 1/2 ft. tall and is made out of 3/8-in. dia. rebar. I used four different length metal rods to build it, bending each rod to 22 1/2 degree angle to form a series of progressively larger octagons. Then I welded these octagon-shaped rods to four straight rods. A truck reflector serves as the hub and makes the sign easy to see at night. The street numbers are fixed to a piece of plastic.

I'm an old carpenter but I love metal work, so this was a fun project for me. **(Harry Scott, P.O. Box 1265, Walsenburg, Colo. 81089 ph 719 738-3847; email: rockworm80@msn.com)**

I was disappointed to see the article, "Hunting On The Internet" in the last issue of FARM SHOW. Such "innovations" should not be held up for acclaim by any legitimate publication. Certainly there are enough responsible farmer-devised innovations and creative ideas out there that your publication does not have to muck around with such despicable practices.

For the record, I am a hunter and fisherman and am not a member of PETA or any other animal rights activist organization. **(Steve Steadham, Graham, N.C.)**

In response to the many FARM SHOW inquiries I've received since your story on how we help people convert 6-volt systems on older machinery to 12 volts, I wanted to let your readers know that our website address is www.fifthaveinternetgarage.com. The "parts counter" there is open 24 hrs. a day, 7 days a week.

Our website describes all the parts necessary to complete a proper 6-to-12-volt conversion as well as plenty of tech tips related to electrical, cooling, and fuel-related projects. You can also learn about a recent project we completed for the Royal Family in England.

By popular demand, we also recently

etc. I even keep a soil moisture tester probe in there. Each tool fits inside a length of exhaust tubing that's welded onto the frame, so my tools are always there when I need them. **(Robert Hittle, 1731 Road P, Liberal, Kansas 67901 ph 620 624-3112)**

introduced alternator mounting brackets for all years of the 2N, 8N, and 9N Ford tractors.

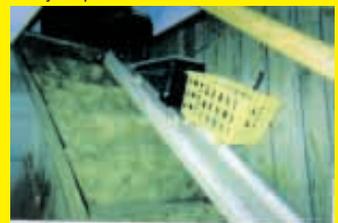
Thanks to all FARM SHOW readers who contacted us in recent months. **(Randy Rundle, Fifth Avenue Antique Auto Parts, 415 Court Street, Clay Center, Kan. 67432 ph 785 632-3450)**

I've noticed in FARM SHOW and other publications that people are using treated lumber for ramps to load tractors and to change oil in cars. I'd like to warn against this practice. It's dangerous! Treated lumber is soft wood and generally a poor grade of lumber. That makes it weak, spongy, wet, and slippery.

Here's what happened to me. I have a 1964 Cub Cadet that weighs about 950 lbs. I bought two 2 by 12 12-ft. long treated planks for ramps to load and unload the tractor from a trailer that's about 2 1/2 ft. high. As I was unloading the tractor, I was about three-fourths of the way down when one of the planks broke, throwing me off the tractor. It almost landed on top of me. I was frightened and embarrassed, since I was at a tractor show.

The price is not much more to get seasoned oak, which is almost unbreakable and good insurance against an accident like mine. **(Len Davis, N6697 Hwy 57, Hilbert, Wis. 54129)**

I made a lift for my stairway that makes it easy to transport myself and small loads up the steps. I have crippled legs so it really helps out. I used a skateboard for



the base with a chair-like box on top. Power comes from a 2-way 1500-lb. 12-volt winch hooked to a lawnmower battery that's connected to a small battery charger. The ramp itself was made from a 2 by 12 plank. I push the "out" button on the winch to send the cart down the ramp and "in" button to pull it back up. A plastic basket attached to the lower end of the skateboard carries additional cargo. **(Norman Channel, 107 So. 17th St., Fairfield, Iowa 52556; ph 641 469-5136; email: nchan@lisco.com)**

Here's a picture of a "three-wheeler" I built in my farm shop. It has a Perkins 104 diesel motor, an 8N Ford tractor radiator, *(Continued on next page)*